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December 2, 2016

**Via ECFS and Email**

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 Twelfth Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Re: *In the Matter of Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization*, WC Docket No. 11-42 –  
Frontier Notice for Forbearance from Lifeline BIAS Requirements

Dear Ms. Dortch:

Pursuant to the Commission's 2016 Lifeline Order<sup>1</sup> and associated Public Notice,<sup>2</sup> Frontier Communications Corporation ("Frontier"), on behalf of its affiliates designated as eligible telecommunications carriers ("ETCs"), hereby files this Notice for Forbearance from Lifeline broadband internet access service ("BIAS") requirements.

In extending the Lifeline program to broadband, the Commission found that forbearance is in the public interest, recognizing the importance of placing carriers with a longstanding commitment to Lifeline on a level-playing field with newer participants.<sup>3</sup> While the Commission has required carriers to make this filing to accept this level-playing field relief, today's filing does not detract from Frontier's commitment to serving low-income consumers. Frontier intends to offer Lifeline-supported BIAS generally where it offers BIAS meeting the Commission's minimum service standards.<sup>4</sup> As the Commission recognizes, carriers that accept forbearance relief "remain eligible for Lifeline broadband support to the extent that they elect to provide that service,"<sup>5</sup> and that is what Frontier intends to do.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization et al.*, Third Report and Order, Further Report and Order, and Order on Reconsideration, 31 FCC Rcd 3962 (2016) ("*2016 Lifeline Reform Order*").

<sup>2</sup> See *Wireline Competition Bureau Provides Guidance Regarding Filing Procedures for Eligible Telecommunications Carriers Seeking to Invoke Forbearance Granted by Lifeline Modernization Order*, Public Notice, WC Docket No. 11-42 (Nov. 22, 2016) ("*Guidance Public Notice*").

<sup>3</sup> See *2016 Lifeline Reform Order* ¶ 311.

<sup>4</sup> See *id.* ¶¶ 69-113.

<sup>5</sup> See *id.* ¶ 311.

Thus, Frontier, on behalf of all of its affiliates designated as ETCs, accepts the Commission's forbearance relief from any requirement to offer Lifeline discounts on BIAS in all census blocks where it is eligible for such forbearance, namely within all Frontier ETC service areas, except in census blocks where Frontier has a Lifeline obligation pursuant to Connect America Fund ("CAF") Phase II.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, Frontier notes that it has exercised its flexibility election in certain CAF Phase II census blocks and accordingly no longer has a CAF Phase II obligation in those census blocks.<sup>7</sup> While Frontier has endeavored to provide the most accurate identification of the census blocks with the relevant CAF II obligation, Frontier asks the Commission to recognize the Lifeline obligation extends only in CAF Phase II census blocks to the extent that these lists do not ultimately reflect Frontier's obligations pursuant to CAF Phase II.

Additionally, Frontier notes that, as the Commission has explained, Frontier's obligation to offer broadband in CAF Phase II census blocks begins when it has deployed broadband at speeds meeting the Commission minimum service requirements.<sup>8</sup> While Frontier continues to rapidly deploy broadband under CAF Phase II and is eager to do so as quickly as possible, CAF Phase II is a six-year program, and the Commission recognizes that "the obligation to provide Lifeline-supported BIAS begins only when the provider has deployed a high-cost supported broadband network to that area and makes its BIAS commercially available."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> See Commission's List of Connect America Phase II Model-Based Support Eligible Census Blocks (2015), available at [https://transition.fcc.gov/wcb/CAM43\\_Supported\\_Locations.zip](https://transition.fcc.gov/wcb/CAM43_Supported_Locations.zip); *Wireline Competition Bureau Authorizes Frontier Communications Corporation to Receive Over \$283 Million In Connect America Phase II Support To Serve 1.3 Million Rural Americans in 28 States*, Public Notice, 30 FCC Rcd 6310 (2015); *Wireline Competition Bureau Authorizes Frontier to Receive Phase II Support in California and Texas*, Public Notice, 31 FCC Rcd 3506 (2016); see also *Guidance PN* at 4 ("[P]rice cap carriers may simply include a link to the Commission's List of Connect America Phase II Model-Based Support Eligible Census Blocks and the public notice indicating the states where the carrier has been authorized to receive Phase II model-based support."). Please note that the only area where Frontier has not accepted CAF Phase II support is in the portion of its Florida territory that it acquired from Verizon in 2016, and Frontier thus accepts forbearance relief in all census blocks in that territory. These census blocks were listed as Verizon census blocks in the Commission's final list of census blocks, as were the census blocks in the areas Frontier acquired from Verizon in Texas and California, which were all Verizon census blocks in those states.

<sup>7</sup> See *Connect America Fund*, Report and Order, 29 FCC Rcd 15644 ¶ 39 (2014). Frontier emphasizes that it accepts the Commission's forbearance relief in these CAF Phase II census blocks where it exercised its flexibility election. Please find a list of these census blocks attached as Attachment A.

<sup>8</sup> See *2016 Lifeline Reform Order* ¶¶ 311, 317-18.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.* ¶ 318.

Additionally, pursuant to the *Guidance Public Notice*, Frontier has endeavored to provide all relevant ETC designation information in the time provided to the best of its ability given the limited time between the issuance of the *Guidance Public Notice* and today's deadline for the election of forbearance relief.<sup>10</sup> Please find this information attached as Attachment B.

Should you have any questions regarding this notice, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ AJ Burton

AJ Burton  
Director, Federal Regulatory Affairs  
Frontier Communications

Attachments

cc: Garnet Hanly  
TelcoLifeline@usac.org

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<sup>10</sup> See *Guidance Public Notice* at 3.